CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. In a Chinese character input method wherein a set of Chinese characters are represented as a sequence of certain symbols and are selected based on matching a given sequence of similar symbols against the set of predefined sequences, wherein the improvement comprises a character selection process which treats each symbol, or sequence of symbols, in any two sequences being compared, as more than the face value of the symbol(s), but also as a marker for a predefined set of sequences any of which may be selected as equivalent to the symbol(s).

2. The method of claim 1, further comprising a method of comparing a given sequence to a predefined one wherein, without the use of a designated 'wildcard' symbol, a match is achieved when the given sequence only matches parts of the predefined sequence.

3. The method of claim 1, further comprising a method of encoding Chinese characters as text strings of another language wherein certain letters used in an encoding are defined to carry certain positional information relating to the components of the Chinese character represented by the encoding.

4. The method of claim 1, further comprising a method of specifying a Chinese character encoding as a text string of another language wherein certain letters present in the specifying string are defined to bear special instructions for the method of claim 1.

5. The method of claim 1, further comprising defining each letter of the English alphabet as a representation of one or more Chinese language strokes, stroke combinations, or radicals, as depicted in Figure 1.

6. The method of claim 1, further comprising a selection technique whereby a set of candidate characters is displayed for user selection by the user entering a symbol which serves as an identifier of the desired candidate wherein the set of identifier symbols overlaps the set of symbols used in defining the Chinese characters themselves, including the character(s) used as termination of the definitions.